Minutes of the Meeting of the
General Dental Council
held at 13:20 on Wednesday 26 July 2017
in Public Session
at 37 Wimpole Street, London W1G 8DQ

Council Members present
William Moyes Chair
Terry Babbs
Catherine Brady
Geraldine Campbell
Rosemary Carter
Margaret Kellett
Alan MacDonald
Kirstie Moons
Lawrence Mudford
Jayendra Patel
Neil Stevenson

Executive in attendance:
Ian Brack Chief Executive and Registrar
Gurvinder Soomal Executive Director, Registration and Corporate Services
Jonathan Green Executive Director, Fitness to Practise (FTP)
Matthew Hill Executive Director, Strategy
Lisa-Marie Roca Principal Legal Adviser
Lisa Cunningham Head of Communications

Staff members in attendance:
Clare Mitchell Head of Governance
Michael Huntley Head of PMO and Reporting
Alex Gooding Business Planning and Reporting Manager
Shazad Choudhry Head of Equality and Diversity
Helen Elderfield Governance and Executive Support Manager

Invited Attendees:

PART ONE – PRELIMINARY ITEMS

1. Opening remarks, apologies for absence and declarations of interest

1.1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1.2. Apologies for absence were received from David Smith and Bobby Davis.

1.3. There were no additional declarations of interest pertaining to items on the agenda.
2. Questions submitted by members of the public
   2.1. The Chair advised that no questions had been received from the public in response to the agenda and papers being posted on the GDC’s website.

3. Minutes of meeting on 22 June 2017
   Discussion
   3.1. The draft minutes were considered and accepted as a true and accurate record of the discussions that took place on 22 June 2017.
   Resolution
   The Council resolved to:
   R.1 Approve the minutes of the meeting held in public session on 22 June 2017 without amendment

4. Matters arising from the meeting on 22 June 2017 and rolling actions list
   Discussion
   4.1. The Council noted progress made with actions arising from previous meetings.
   4.2. There were no matters arising.
   Resolution
   The Council resolved to:
   R.2 Note the progress made with regard to actions arising from previous meetings

5. Decisions Log
   Discussion
   5.1. The Council noted that the committees had not taken any decisions under delegated powers since the meeting on 22 June 2017, nor had any matters been decided by Chair’s Action.
   Resolution
   The Council resolved to:
   R.3 Note that no decisions had been taken under delegated powers since the previous Council meeting.

PART TWO – ITEMS FOR DECISION AND DISCUSSION

6. PSA Investigation Report into whistleblowing – action plan status report and benefits tracking update
   Discussion
   6.1. Gurvinder Soomal introduced the item by reminding the Council that the executive had committed to providing an update on the PSA action plan status report when it was closed in November 2016. He confirmed that at its meeting in June the update, benefits tracking report and full action plan had been considered by the Audit & Risk Committee.
6.2. Michael Huntley gave assurance to the Council that all the actions recommended by
the PSA in their report had been completed. He outlined the approach taken to
tracking the benefits of actions taken using SMART objectives to ensure that the
success of implementing the action plan could be measured. He described how this
had been further broken down to define outputs, outcomes, the benefits and the
relevant whistleblowing theme.

6.3. Michael advised that of the total of 22 actions being monitored in the benefits
tracking report, two were rated as amber, four grey (defined as data identified to be
measured at a future date), and 16 green and on track.

6.4. Michael gave an update on the two amber actions: PSA/1.1.2 Training in recruitment
best practice and PSA/1.4.4 Signposting of key corporate documents through the
intranet. In respect of the former, it was stated that from Q2, figures would be
compiled to ascertain how many employees were recruited first time from the first
recruitment campaign and how many passed their probation. Regarding the
intranet, Michael informed the Council that update work was underway and
incorporated metrics to measure user engagement.

6.5. The Council's attention was also drawn to the update of the PSA action plan close
out report. It was noted that although 10% of the actions were rated as on hold,
none were directly related to the PSA recommendations: these were actions that the
EMT had identified separately and incorporated into the action plan. It was
explained that they were on hold as they were being considered against other
strategic priorities in the 2017 and 2018 business plans.

6.6. Alan MacDonald, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, commented that the
committee viewed this as an excellent piece of work. They had recognised that a lot
of lessons and improvements to ways of working had been captured and embedded
throughout the organisation as a result and there was every confidence in the data
presented.

6.7. The Council expressed its thanks to all those involved for the successful outcomes.

Resolution

The Council resolved to:

R.4 Note the update paper to the ARC from 28 June at Appendix 1;
R.5 Note the benefits tracking report at Appendix 2;
R.6 Note the updates to actions on the PSA action plan report at Appendix 3.

7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – strategy and action plan

Discussion

7.1. Shaz Choudhry joined the meeting to present an update on the equality, diversity
and inclusion strategy and action plan which sought to ensure that the GDC
remained compliance with equality legislation and embedded the principles in the
core functions.

7.2. He thanked members of the Remuneration Committee for their input which had
helped to align the strategy with the organisation’s key objectives and behaviours.

7.3. Council members sought clarity on the monitoring activities both of the workforce
and also of registrants and informants. It was explained that for staff, the electronic
HR system would be updated to enable individuals to update their records and
enable the data to be used to identify any concerns or issues. Likewise for
registrants and informants, the data would be requested and captured and then
used to investigate how best to communicate any patterns or trends.
7.4. There was some discussion concerning the action plan, and in particular whether additional activity needed to be defined to promote engagement with certain groups. It was explained that this would continue to develop as data was acquired but there was a conscious decision that 2017 would remain internally focussed to lay the foundations for more outward looking activity from 2018. It was confirmed that because the GDC had taken some time to reach this point, the Remuneration Committee supported this approach and this was endorsed by Council members.

7.5. It was suggested that some areas of the action plan may be difficult to ascertain what progress was being made and Shaz explained that he was working with colleagues in the PMO to introduce some SMART objectives as well as working with colleagues in the policy team to input to the patient engagement strategy work.

7.6. Council members welcomed the work completed to date and requested regular reports on progress.

**Action**

A.1 Regular progress reports to be added to the Council’s workplan.

**Resolution**

The Council resolved to:

R.7 Approve the 2017-2020 EDI Strategy;
R.8 Approve the 2017 EDI Action Plan

8. Quality Assurance Group – Q2 report

**Discussion**


8.2. Jonathan reminded the Council that the QAG is a second line of defence system that operates alongside the internal Compliance Team in quality assuring the decision making at all stages of the FTP process. Whilst the majority of cases reviewed by QAG are selected by the Head of Compliance from a sample of ‘higher risk’ decisions, some cases are ‘self-referred’ by senior managers as decisions that may benefit from further scrutiny.

8.3. The numbers of cases reviewed at each stage was explained and the RAG ratings given with further detail explained where key themes had been identified. Overall, 22 of the decisions reviewed required further action and six received full assurance. Learning themes identified were: 1:1 conversation (5 cases), feedback (1 case), new training (3 cases), guidance change (3 cases), raise profile (5 cases), refresher training (5 cases).

8.4. Jonathan went on to advise the Council that an independent review had also been completed that audited 160 cases and which rated 90% of the sample as green with only one as red. He also explained that the Decision Assurance Group was being introduced whose work would be reported to Council.

**Resolution**

The Council resolved to:

R.9 Consider and discuss the Q2 2017 report of the Quality Assurance Group.
9. Council Induction and next steps

Discussion

9.1. Clare Mitchell advised that the outline plans for the new Council members’ induction had been discussed by the Remuneration Committee at its April meeting and feedback had been incorporated into the plans presented to the Council. She noted that the induction was part of a wider learning and development programme for individual Council members and Council as a whole, informed by a skills audit and the outcomes of members’ 2017 appraisals. Neil Stevenson, as Chair of the Remuneration Committee confirmed that the revised proposals had taken the committee’s comments into account and represented a good piece of work.

9.2. It was noted that the event on the 12/13 September was designed to provide the new members with necessary background information about the organisation, how it works and what would be expected of them. The second event, coinciding with the September Council meetings at which the new members would be observers, would offer the opportunity to begin joint working and knowledge sharing. Ian Brack reminded members that there was a very great deal of information which needed to be transmitted to the new members at the first meeting.

9.3. Members favoured earlier interaction and expressed an interest in seeing the plans for a buddying system. It was agreed that the paper would be forwarded to the new members with a request for notification of any omissions.

9.4. Council members thanked Clare for the proposals and acknowledged the work involved in putting the programme together.

Action

A.2 Council paper to be circulated to the new Council members with the request for notification of any errors.

Resolution

The Council resolved to:

R.10 Comment on the plans for Council member induction;
R.11 Comment on the proposals for the annual review of the Council’s effectiveness and plans for a learning and development programme for both Council as a whole, and individual Council members.

10. Appraisal of non-Council members of Committees

Discussion

10.1. Clare Mitchell set out the proposed process for the appraisal of the non-Council members on the Statutory Panellists Assurance Committee (SPC) and the non-statutory committees of the GDC for approval. She noted that the proposal had been considered by the Remuneration Committee at its meeting on 4 July 2017.

10.2. It was noted that the policy for the appointment of non-Council members to the SPC and the non-statutory committees of the GDC referred to the appraisal of non-Council members as part of the reappointments process but did not include a specific appraisal process. Clare pointed out that not only was there an ongoing requirement to conduct appraisals which needed to be met but that there was a time constraint because two of the existing committee chairs were due to demit office at the end of September 2017 they needed to complete the appraisals of their committee members prior to that date.
10.3. The Council noted that both Neil Stevenson and Alan Macdonald confirmed that they would complete the appraisals as required and they agreed that the process outlined was appropriate to measure individual performance.

Resolution
The Council resolved to:
R.12 Approve the proposed appraisal process.

11. GDC Pension Scheme – Deed sealing

Discussion
11.1. Lisa-Marie Roca introduced the paper, which proposed the appointment of a sole corporate trustee to the GDC pension scheme and a change reflecting new legislation which would allow a payment to be made from the defined contribution scheme for a member’s financial advice.

11.2. Staff members who were members of the scheme declared an interest in the item and Neil Stevenson reminded those present of his standing declaration in relation to Black Rock investment managers.

11.3. Lisa-Marie reminded the Council that the two changes were presented to the Council at its May meeting and the executive were actioned to communicate the proposed changes to the trustee structure prior to any alteration being made to the Plan Rules. She advised that this action had been completed and eight comments had been received from members which fell broadly into three themes: accountability of the professional trustee, standard of communication and cost of the professional trustees’ fees. All queries had been satisfactorily addressed and no requests for a meeting had been received.

11.4. The Council agreed that their earlier concerns had been addressed and approved the sealing of the revised pension scheme deed. The Council expressed its thanks to those who had served as GDC and member nominated trustees.

Resolution
The Council resolved to:
R.13 Amend the trustee structure of the GDC Pension Scheme by appointing a sole corporate trustee;
R.14 Allow a pension advice payment from the Defined Contribution Fund.

12. Reappointment of external auditors

Discussion
12.1. Gurvinder Soomal sought the Council’s approval to reappoint haysmacintyre as the GDC’s external auditor for the 2017 financial statements.

12.2. It was noted that haysmacintyre had initially been appointed in 2012 for three years and that their contract had been extended for 2015 and 2016.

12.3. He stated that the EMT recommended the reappointment to the Audit and Risk committee and this was agreed at the committee meeting on 28 June 2017.

Resolution
The Council resolved to:
R.15 Approve that haysmacintyre are reappointed as the GDC’s financial auditors for the 2017 financial statements.
13. Committee Updates

Discussion

13.1. **Audit & Risk Committee:** The key items considered by the ARC during their teleconference on 28 June were noted.

13.2. **Finance & Performance Committee:** Terry Babbs noted that at their recent meetings the FPC had noted issues concerning the recruitment and retention of staff and had consequently brought forward the in-depth review of the Organisational Development directorate. Additionally, the committee had charged the EMT with considering the extent to which resources would be flexed to ensure that the Shifting the balance programme would be supported in addition to delivering budget and business plan objectives. Secondly, EMT had been asked to consider the provision of resources for business as usual planning and a central policy resource which would support the provision of a coherent framework for the organisation.

13.3. Terry noted that these concerns highlighted the number of large scale issues facing the new Council members which would need to be considered when agenda planning to ensure that there was sufficient provision for handovers and background briefings.

13.4. **Remuneration Committee:** It was noted that only one of the existing committee members would remain in post after October as the other two were reaching the end of their terms.

13.5. **Policy and Research Board:** The work on the self-triage mechanism described in the report was commended as a good example of cross organisational working. It was explained that a useful workshop had taken place on the Patient Strategy and that work was being taken forward.

13.5.1. **Horizon Scan:** Lisa Cunningham advised that the developments in dentistry described on page 4 of the report related to England and Wales and not just Wales as stated.

13.5.2. **Shifting the Balance:** Matthew Hill added to the update given in the paper by confirming that there was continuing engagement with the profession regarding the progression of initiatives in Shifting the Balance.

Resolution

The Council resolved to:

R.16 **Note** the updates from the most recent meetings of the committees.

PART THREE – ITEMS FOR NOTING

14. Education QA – Decisions taken

Resolution

The Council resolved to:

R.17 **Note** the decisions taken by the Registrar under delegated powers relating to quality assurance of education and training.
15. Use of the Seal – annual report

Resolution

The Council resolved to:

R.18  Note the use of the GDC seal between 18 May 2016 and 26 July 2017.

PART FOUR – CONCLUSION OF BUSINESS

16. Any Other Business

16.1. The Chair noted that Helen Elderfield would be leaving the GDC at the end of September. Council members thanked Helen for her hard work and contribution to improved governance in the organisation.

17. Review of the meeting

17.1. Council members agreed that the quality of papers continued to improve and made for a better discussion.

17.2. In terms of format, it was suggested that the paper on the PSA action plan benefits tracker would have been better delivered as a presentation and that this could have led to a longer and more detailed discussion.

17.3. Members noted that whilst the agendas for the day’s meetings had been full, this was not always the case and the cancellation of the previous day’s workshop had been a disappointment. It was suggested that some consultation on which of the two dates to cancel would have been welcomed. This was noted for future reference.

18. Close of the meeting

18.1. There being no further business the meeting was closed at 14:40.

Date of next meeting: 28 September 2017.

Name of Chair:
William Moyes